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AUTHOR Berthelot, Dolly
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ABSTRACT

"Picneer Spirit 76," an original bicentennial anthology from the Smoky Mountains region, was begun to gain in-depth editing and publishing experience and to test the feasibility of having journalism students produce a publication for a market beyond campus. This report traces the development of this book in magazine format, offers a basic plan for producing and distributing such a book within the quarter or semester system, and suggests the potential for learning laboratories within journalism departments. Created with limited funds and resources, and marketed to tourists and regional residents, the book contains articles and photographs in 84 pages. Participants were mainly University of Tennessee upperclass and graduate student volunteers. The results of the book project indicate that a regional or city book laboratory, within a university journalism department, could offer students realistic education and professional experience with academic guidance and evaluation. (Author/JM)

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REGIONAL BOOK IN MAGAZINE FORMAT:

PROJECT FOR JOURNALISM SCHOOLS

Dolly Berthelot

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville

Magazine Division
ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM

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REGIONAL BOOK IN MAGAZINE FORMAT SUGGESTS PROJECT FOR JOURNALISM SCHOOLS

Dolly Berthelot, The University of Tennessee at Knoxville

ABSTRACT

of a paper presented to the Teaching Session of the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism University of Maryland, August, 1976

This report traces the development of a regional book in magazine format and suggests the potential for a similar learning laboratory within journalism departments.

PIONEER SPIRIT 76, an original Bicentennial anthology of the Smoky Mountains region, was begun as a master's project in lieu of thesis. The editor and publisher intended to gain in-depth editing and publishing experience and to test the feasibility of having students produce a publication for a market beyond campus. PIONEER SPIRIT was created in the editor's home with limited funds and resources, and marketed to tourists and regional residents. Participants were mainly University of Tennessee upperclass and graduate student volunteers. After nine intensive months, 10,000 copies were printed in December, 1975, and 8,000 had been sold at a small profit by the following summer. The book contains articles and photographs in 84 8-1/2 x 11" pages, more than one fourth in full color.

The results of PIONEER SPIRIT 76 indicate that a regional or city book laboratory, within university journalism departments, could offer students in-depth, realistic education, and professional level experience, with academic supervision, guidance, and evaluation. Implementation of such a project for one academic year could suggest the feasibility of a regional or city periodical laboratory.

This report offers a basic plan for producing and distributing a book in magazine format within the quarter or semester system, suggests structural approaches, potential objectives, factors to evaluate in advance, and potential market considerations. The inter-disciplinary requirements of the project are emphasized.

Response to a well-circulated paste-up excerpt of the planned publication realistically indicates whether or not the book should actually go to press--before massive expenses are incurred. Approached as though the book will be published, the venture provides significant learning opportunity, even if a final decision is made to avoid printing. Pre-publication bulk orders reduce the gamble to the department and may provide adequate funds for printing.

PIONEER SPIRIT 76 is an anthology of original articles and photographs portraying that distinctive part of America that encompasses the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Created especially for the Bicentennial, the book in magazine format explores the cultural and natural heritage of a geographic area within a radius of approximately 90 miles from Knoxville, Tennessee. Topics include the Cherokee Indians; the Revolutionary and Civil War periods; modern pioneerism by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Oak Ridge; Appalachian dialect, folklore, music, festivals, and crafts; backpacking and camping in the Smokies.

About one fourth of the 84 pages are in full color, including a popular photo gallery, "Smokies Through the Seasons." The antique look often chosen for commemorative publications was rejected in favor of a modern, dynamic design with 1970s' appeal. The 8-1/2" x 11" format, 80 lb. Mountie Matte paper, 8 pt. Kromekote cover, and perfect binding were selected to allow design flexibility, good photo display, a gift book image, and relative permanence.

The cover photograph of a quilter's hand at work suggests the current revival of that pioneer craft, which is, like the book itself, a link between past and present.

Of the nearly 10,000 copies printed last December, approximately 8,000 had been sold by early summer, 1976, and a small profit had been made.

PIONEER SPIRIT 76 was created with limited funds, limited human and facility resources, limited prior knowledge and experience--but almost unlimited motivation, faith, determination, and hard work.

The fact that a dream--or obsession- could be transformed into reality under such conditions suggests that similar enterprises might be tackled within schools of journalism. Part of the motivation was to test that hypothesis, test it subjectively to be sure, in the harsh but illuminating light of experience.

Having free lanced articles to magazines, edited a daily newspaper, and taken two graduate magazine courses at The University of Tennessee, I sought still more in-depth magazine knowledge and preparation. Comprehensive magazine- and book-oriented journalism education seems to be limited in U.S. universities. I soon learned, as no doubt many have before me, that what is not available ready made and neatly prepackaged can be created. PIONEER SPIRIT 76 became a sort of homemade magazine education beyond the classroom, and a study of the potential for such a project within higher education.

PIONEER SPIRIT 76 had begun, ironically, on April Fool's Day, 1975; initial phases served as a master's project in lieu of thesis. The book was to reach the public before the Christmas holidays, prior to the Bicentennial year.

Articles were assigned to persons with appropriate interests and expertise, and were geared specifically to PIONEER SPIRIT. Photographs were selected mainly from abundant unpublished files and were coordinated with copy. Material was submitted by area volunteers, 14 article writers and dozens of photographers, compensated only by a copy of the book, experience, exposure, constructive criticism, and the chance to make a meaningful contribution. Among the participants were professional writers and professors, but mostly students, seniors and master's

candidates from The University of Tennessee. Several students helped part time with promotional contacts and proofing.

All coordinating, editing, designing, publicizing, etc.,was done (more or less around the clock) in the remarkably adaptable facilities of my home, temporarily a publishing house. My husband--an engineering instructor and doctoral student--became my most consistent chief assistant, particularly in the areas of business, photography, facilities conversion, and distribution. Closet doors were turned into drafting tables. The floor was barely visible under copy and photos...

A search for outside funding was futile, given the time limitation, except for $1,000 from Technical Business Assistance Center, a University of Tennessee agency which supports marketing studies for new small businesses that may benefit the region. The TBA funds permitted the creation and circulation of a paste-up excerpt (20 of the 84 pages) used to seek support and pre-publication orders. Shuffling the excerpt around to people of various ages and status, (including organizations, businesses, and potential retailers), assured me that PIONEER SPIRIT 76 would have broad appeal, helped determine a selling price, and suggested a viable quantity--much smaller than first envisioned.

After much comparative shopping, I persuaded a high-quality low-bid printer in Charlotte, N.C., to accept post-publication payment on the merit of pre-publication bulk orders for 5,000 books. Approximately nine months after conception, and following intense labor, PIONEER SPIRIT 76 was published.

Of the estimated $14,000 incurred in expenses by June, 1976, $10,000 went to the printer for typography, half tones and separations,

press work, and binding. The rest has been consumed by travel, telephoning, and postage ($1,000), supplies ($150), assistance ($1,000), income taxes ($1,000), complimentary copies ($750), and miscellaneous ($100).

My husband and I have handled all distribution to individuals, groups, and retailers. The single book direct-from-publisher sale price was $3 before publication and until March 1 when the price rose to $3.60, including postage and handling or car delivery from my home headquarters. Mail orders have come from as far away as Hawaii. Outlets include book stores, craft shops and shows, organizations, and tourist centers, mainly, but not exclusively, in East Tennessee and environs. Bulk quantity orders, at rates reduced by 5 to 40 per cent of the basic price, account for an estimated 90 per cent of sales.

Publicity has included direct mail, articles and reviews in most regional newspapers, speeches to organizations, personal contact, news-feature spots and talk shows on local television. One medium-size daily newspaper places advertisements free on a space available basis and takes 15 per cent of the resulting coupon sales. This approach has been implemented too recently to evaluate. No expenses have been incurred for advertising, other than direct mail and personal promotions.

As of early summer, profit is approximately $4,000, hardly professional wages for more than a year's work. While PIONEER SPIRIT 76 could not be considered a business or financial success, it was never expected to be. It has more than paid for itself, provided enormous

personal satisfaction, growth, and experience, and filled a definite publication need in the area.

PIONEER SPIRIT 76 was intended to offer in-depth insight into what makes the Smoky Mountains region special--to persons who had lived here forever, and to tourists with little knowledge. A heavy emphasis on graphics was calculated to offer grab appeal, even among the many poorly educated persons in the primary market, and those quickly passing through.

Response indicates the book's appeal is broad. It is being used as a classroom supplement in some elementary, secondary, and college courses. It is a popular gift, given by businesses, institutions, and individuals. PIONEER SPIRIT is well received by 10-year-olds and 80-year-olds; natives, newcomers, transplanted Appalachians, and tourists; mountaineers and urbanites; plumbers, professors, and professional critics.

My experience, and that of other participants, has been invaluable. Perhaps it would be worthwhile for more students to gain such experience, under somewhat more sensible conditions.

As city and regional magazines spring up throughout the country, city or regional magazine laboratories (such as that at Ohio University) would seem to offer a significant educational opportunity.

I am currently developing a nation-wide survey to investigate attitudes heads of journalism departments hold toward the concept of the city or regional lab in which journalism students produce a periodical aimed at an audience off the campus. My guess is that many departments would be reluctant to embrace such an innovation full blown. A

book in magazine format may offer a first step.

Creation of a publication such as PIONEER SPIRIT 76 affords some benefits of the city or regional magazine laboratory within, perhaps, more manageable limits, with a more short-range investment. Participating students meet professional demands and gain valuable professional level experience, but with academic supervision, guidance, and evaluation.

Capable and determined students and faculty should be able to create and distribute a marketable book within an academic year, at little or no expense to the department or university. The following basic plan suggests some major steps involved in the enterprise, within time frames appropriate for universities or the quarter or semester systems.

BASIC PLAN, ACADEMIC SCHEDULE FOR QUARTER OR SEMESTER SYSTEMS. ONE YEAR PRODUCTION OF BOOK IN MAGAZINE FORMAT IN JOURNALISM LABORATORY.

1st Quarter — 1st Semester

Investigate publications that now exist or are planned in the region.

Formulate proposal, policy, topics, target audience.

Compare paper, typography, binding, etc. Make printer specifications.

Create article and photo lists. Set deadlines, guidelines.

Assign articles and photos to appropriate persons. Allow 2 weeks.

Select probable articles and photos and edit them. Assign rewrites.

Explore financial and legal issues, test possible routes, set budget.

Finalize specifications, submit to printers (etc.), get bids.

Put fund route into action, begin planning distribution.

2nd Quarter

Select printer, typographer, photoengraver. Set all deadlines.

Edit final articles, crop photos, measure contents precisely.

Design dummy of entire book, revising as necessary.

Plan and design excerpt (3 copies?), to be used in seeking support.

Submit excerpt material to typographer, proof, re-proof, paste up.

2nd Semester

Create and send publicity to all regional media, print and broadcasting.

Prepare a questionnaire to be included in the book as reader survey?

3rd Quarter

Peddle excerpt to potential buyers, retailers, distributors.

Seek support, orders, publicity, funds, feedback, new directions.

Determine exact quantity of books, sale price, bulk rates, distribution.

Write blurbs, cutlines, headlines-titles.

Finalize design, lay out precisely on grid sheets.

Submit photos, copy, layouts (all properly marked) to printer, etc.

Proof copy, photos; proof corrected copy, photos. Supervise paste up.

Proof and reproof repros or silverprints of all pages.

Summer Session — Summer Session

Create, disseminate, and stimulate publicity, promotion. Speak to groups.

Receive books, check copies, get copyright, keep accurate records.

Distribute pre-publication orders and all other books. Seek and sell!

Tabulate and analyze survey responses.

Evaluate the process and product. Compile suggestions for future.

Ideally, the project would involve students interested in various media and various aspects of communication. The structure, needs, and adaptability of specific universities must be considered in developing any of the following possible approaches:

1. A singular multi-faceted laboratory of consecutive, intensive courses (preferably team taught) in which advanced students would handle all phases of editing, production, promotion, and distribution. Contributions to all phases could be made by persons outside the laboratory, even outside the program or college.

2. A singular laboratory of consecutive, intensive courses in which advanced students would handle editing and production as a nucleus staff coordinated with other existing courses in writing, graphic design, photography, public relations, advertising-promotion, communications law, survey research, etc.

3. Two laboratories of consecutive, intensive courses in which students would be divided into interest and skill areas roughly corresponding to the separate but coordinated divisions within most professional publications. Responsibilities follow:

   a. Writing, editing, photography, design, production.
   b. Business, public relations, advertising, distribution.

4. Any arrangement or combination which seems appropriate for the specific institution.

Whatever approach is taken, it should be emphasized that the project requires interdisciplinary skills, coordination, and cooperation, and a firm year-long commitment by a nucleus staff of students supervised by competent faculty-advisers.

Certainly the time and effort required to create a top quality book for wide distribution could be expected to surpass that required for the typical campus magazine. The educational value could be expected to increase proportionally.

A book about the city, or aspects of the city, is most suitable for large metropolitan areas; the regional publication is appropriate for areas with small cities or towns and rural communities.

The regional or city book as a learning laboratory could serve some or all of the following objectives:

1. To induce students to investigate the journalistic needs of a particular market beyond campus.

2. To acquaint students with the steps involved in satisfying those needs through production of a book in magazine format.

3. To confront students with practical publication problems within "real life" situations, and help them solve such problems.

4. To make available the multiplicity of magazine- or book-related experience from concept through distribution.

5. To allow students to apply theories and skills that they have learned academically.

6. To develop specific magazine and book skills at a professional level.

7. To compare and contrast magazines and books with other forms of print journalism with which students may be more familiar.

8. To explore the inter-relationships of newspaper, direct mail, broadcasting, advertising, public speaking, and other promotion.

9. To teach students to create and activate a complete public relations-promotion campaign for a new publication.

10. To practice developing, implementing, and tabulating an in-publication survey.

11. To provide expert criticism and evaluation in a controlled environment suited to that purpose.

12. To realistically investigate the potential success of new city or regional publications under certain conditions.

13. To test the potential for a regional periodical to serve as an ongoing learning laboratory.

14. To pinpoint problems that might exist with such a laboratory.

15. To alleviate such problems before committing to a city or regional periodical lab, if such a move seems warranted.

16. To provide a publication that may elicit future support.

17. To determine what curriculum changes, if any, may best serve students with goals related to magazines or books.

Departments considering development of a regional publication laboratory for a market beyond campus would probably want to evaluate, in advance, the adequacy of the following factors:

1. Student capability--Are enough of them prepared to handle it?
2. Student interest, support--Do they want to? Will they come through?
3. Faculty background, expertise--Who has magazine training, experience?
4. Faculty interest, support--Who is determined enough to make it work?
5. Administrative interest, support--Do they approve? Are they pleased?
6. Availability of initial working funds--$1,000 security blanket?
7. Compensatory benefits for students--Will they gain enough?
8. Compensatory benefits for faculty--Will they gain enough?
9. Facilities--Is there sufficient space, equipment, good printer near?
10. Suitable audience--Who will buy and for what price? How many?
11. Suitable distribution points and process--How best to reach market?
12. Need for such a publication in the area--Competition? History?
13. University framework--Is it adaptable? What changes are needed?
14. Department framework--Is it adaptable? What changes are needed?
15. Resources for consultation--People and books for all aspects?

It is highly doubtful that anyone could answer affirmatively for all of the above. Had I followed my own list, I would probably have accepted the barrage of warnings: It can't be done. Consideration of all factors may help interested departments realize what they are up against and may suggest solutions. Capable, dedicated people often find ways to compensate for deficiencies.

Market questions require extensive research, which may be effectively handled by advanced classes or independent study students.

Some affirmatives in the following list would seem to be essential to an appropriate potential market.

1. The market has no similar book available or in progress.
2. The market lacks periodicals that explore the topics in depth, in any form similar to that being considered.
3. The market area anticipates or invites major growth.
4. The market area is about to celebrate an anniversary.
5. The market has a relatively high literacy and education level.
6. The market area stresses tourism.
7. The market has a fascination with itself, its history and culture.
8. The market has a particular interest in a subject which this book will explore from multiple angles.
9. The population and income of the area is sufficient to provide enough potential buyers to pay for production and distribution.
10. Response to a paste-up excerpt is positive.

Evaluation of the above should help determine not only whether to publish, but to some extent, what to publish. For example, a yes on 6, 7, or 8 suggests varying content, which may or may not be compatible together

Obviously printing is the largest expense; yet it is the final phase least crucial to the educational process. It is vital that all phases be handled as though the book will be published. Should final market research, with unprinted paste-up, indicate the book should not go to press, participants would surely be disappointed; they would, nevertheless, have been realistically educated. At worst, the summer term would be dropped, most objectives would have been met, and participants could contemplate what to change next time...

VITA

Dolly Berthelot is a professional journalist and teacher who is moving into journalism education at the college and university level. Her primary special interests are magazine writing, editing, and design and creative teaching. She is editor-publisher-designer of PIONEER SPIRIT 76, an original anthology of the Smoky Mountains region and a free lance writer-editor-consultant. She is pursuing doctoral studies in Communications/Journalism and Curriculum and Instruction at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Dolly Berthelot
1002 Log Haven Drive
Knoxville, TN 37920

Tel. (615) 573-0513